

Frequently Asked Questions

Modifications to Federally Permitted Headboat Vessels Reporting Requirements in the Gulf of Mexico Fishing for Reef Fish and Coastal Migratory Pelagics

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What is the Headboat Electronic Reporting Amendment?

- The Headboat Electronic Reporting Amendment amends the fishery management plans for reef fish and coastal migratory pelagics.
- The Headboat Electronic Reporting framework action modifies data reporting for federally permitted headboat vessels (headboats) in the Gulf of Mexico requiring them to submit weekly electronic fishing records to NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Fisheries Science Center or at intervals shorter than a week if notified otherwise. Previously, reports were submitted monthly. The new regulations are effective on March 5, 2014.

Why is the Headboat Electronic Reporting Amendment necessary?

- One of the purposes of this action is to allow better monitoring of recreational annual catch limits.
- The increased frequency of headboat data reporting implemented in this action will help improve population assessments because it will provide a more accurate record of headboat landings.

What are the notable changes to the reporting requirements ?

- Headboats are required to report weekly or at intervals shorter than a week, if notified otherwise. If no fishing activity occurred during a week, an electronic report stating so must be submitted for that week.
- Headboat owners and operators, who are selected by the NOAA Fisheries' Science and Research Director, will be required to submit an electronic fishing record of all fish caught through the Southeast Region Headboat Survey, an electronic reporting system developed by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center.

Who will be required to submit fishing records electronically?

- Headboat vessels fishing for reef fish and coastal migratory pelagic species in the Gulf of Mexico are required to submit fishing records electronically.

What if I don't submit fishing records on time?

- Headboat owners and operators who are delinquent in submitting their reports are prohibited from continuing to harvest and possess Gulf of Mexico reef fish or coastal migratory pelagic fish until they have submitted all required reports.

Where can I find more information about the amendment?

- The Headboat Electronic Reporting Amendment is available on line at: NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office Web site: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_fisheries/generic/2013/headboat_reporting/, or the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Web site: <http://www.gulfcouncil.org/>.
- Any questions regarding reporting requirements should be directed to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Beaufort Laboratory at 252-728-8618.